

Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Engineering Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday, January 19, 2023

Members present: Harmony Anderson, Julia Curran, Andrew Frenz, Austin Holik, Leisa Meeuwen-Ristuben, Andrea Riehl, Raina Urton, Peter Vader, John Mark Lucas, Kadence Novak

Staff: Andrew Degerstrom

Chair Leisa Meeuwen-Ristuben called the meeting to order.

Public Works staff Nathan Koster presented the 2nd Street Resurfacing and Pedestrian Improvement Project. After the staff presentation, PAC members made comments and asked questions.

Julia: What is the impact of providing a 2-way bikeway on numbers of riders on the other side of the street?

Nathan: Hopefully the 2-way facility incentivizes riding on that side of the street, but not 100% of riders will utilize it.

Julia: Would you consider protected bike facilities on both sides of the street?

Nathan: Not being considered due to a combination of budget and conflict between modes.

Julia: Will you collect data on usage of 2-way bike facilities vs. the street in the future?

Nathan: Yes. Wider 2-way facilities are often appreciated because they allow more space for certain users, e.g., cargo bikes, groups riding together, etc.

Andrea: Are you evaluating stops and signals?

Nathan: Not proposing changes but are thinking about stop placement.

Andrea: Ensure intersection design clearly communicates to drivers that this is a 2-way bike facility.

Andrea: Can you describe changes that were made to this project in response to the temporary closure?

Nathan: One big change is that there is more funding available due to an increased interest in the project.

Andrea: Are we considering making the closure permanent?

Nathan: No. The closure created a lot of other issues regarding drivers avoiding the closure— driving around closure on the sidewalk or in landscaping, limited and difficult access to some properties, vehicles circling blocks, bringing worse traffic to some parts of Washington.

Austin: What feedback have you received on the closure?

Nathan: Public perception was that the closure had strong positive impacts on public safety and reducing reckless behavior, but had other negative consequences as just noted.

Andrea: Is a parking study being conducted as part of the project?

Nathan: Because the parking in this area is metered, good data on meter utilization already exists. Data shows generally 60-80% parking utilization during most of the day. Peak parking utilization is in the summer, especially summer weekends when there is full utilization. Very low parking utilization overnight.

Austin: Appreciate the emphasis on curb cuts where they are missing along Gold Medal Park. 13th Ave S has a sidewalk gap. Is eliminating that sidewalk gap being looked at?

Nathan: U of M wants to incorporate finishing the sidewalk on the SE side of 13th Ave S with this project.

John Mark Lucas (U of M rep): Yes, the University has requested an estimate from Public Works for the cost of adding a sidewalk to this block as part of this project and is interested in paying for the construction of the sidewalk depending on the outcome.

Peter: Interested in the feedback you've received regarding perceptions of pedestrian/bike/scooter conflict vs. perceptions of pedestrian/car conflict. What is the worst case outcome for the bikeway?

Nathan: We have no data showing any pattern of serious injuries or crime associated with scooters. There is a possibility of the bikeway moving from the north side of 2nd St to the south side. One consideration is how to mitigate illegal parking by buses and trucks which often park in this area, especially for the Guthrie and the Farmers Market, concern that buses and trucks blocking the bikeway could be worse on the north side of the street.

Julia: Consider reducing driveway curb cuts, for example unused curb cuts that exist at the former Izzy's site. Talk more to nonresidents. This area is a regional destination with a number of attractions that appeal to a wide variety of people. Don't prioritize only the views of residents in an area that is important to so many from across the city and region.

Andrew: Given the relatively low speeds in this corridor and data on crosswalk compliance, add marked crosswalks at all intersections. Supportive of bike facility on north side of the street due to contiguity with park space. Supportive of the bike facility continuing around to 13th Ave S. The existing painted bike lane on 13th Ave S is illegally blocked more often than most bike lanes.

Andrea: Consider raised crossings of 2nd St at Portland Ave, possibly at Chicago Ave as well. Areas where a high volume of pedestrians cross this street to access major destinations.

Nathan: Raised crossings will be difficult with this project, they will consider but expect they will not be able to incorporate them. 2nd St has an unusual number of manholes and given the project budget, raised crossings could only be considered where they would not change the grade at a manhole.

Modifying the elevation of a manhole rim would consume an inordinate amount of the project budget.

Austin: Concerns about the socio-economic status of those being engaged with (mostly residents) vs. the wide variety of backgrounds of people who visit this area regularly. How is general public comment being solicited? Is there engagement specifically with students at the University?

Nathan: There has been one open house, a larger event will be forthcoming in March. Staff is bringing the data-driven approach of the racial equity framework forward in their engagement vs. being purely reactionary to feedback.

Julia: The racial equity framework is great, but there is still a lot of value in direct contact for the specific project.

Leisa: Wants to know more about how the early engagement for the project played out, engagement with neighborhood residents vs. neighborhood visitors, out of town tourists even?

Nathan: Engagement with tourists has been limited to date but can be something to include in the final phase.

Julia: Ask people who drive to the area what the barrier to mode shift is for them.

Kadence: Interested in what you have heard from MacPhail, where are their students coming from?

Nathan: They are very much in a hybrid model and have students from around the globe. They are very forward thinking on access and wanting the area to meet the highest accessibility standards.

Peter: I think we have good data here on our interests that we can use to write a resolution. We need more engagement of transit users. Should we try to write a resolution here today?

PAC members and staff then began a discussion of a resolution expressing general support for the project as presented, highlighting specific components with support, as well as areas where improvement was desired. An initial draft resolution was put together as a group, with editing to occur via email prior to the next full PAC meeting.

Leisa adjourned the meeting.